IN THEATERS APRIL 30 – MAY 6, 2026

FROM EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LEE STROBEL

THE SCIENCE THAT REVEALS A MIND BEHIND THE UNIVERSE

THE STORY OF EVERYTHING

CHURCH DISCUSSION GUIDE

For church leaders, small groups, student ministry, and community groups

TheStoryOfEverything.film

A Sypher Studios Production | Fathom Events

WATCH TRAILER

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

About This Discussion Guide

This guide is written for church Student Ministry and Next Gen leaders, adult Sunday school teachers, pastors, and the leaders of various community groups. After its introductory sequence, the film is organized into four chapters, each typically containing four parts. This Discussion Guide follows that same structure.

This facilitates the option of pausing the film at each chapter-part marker on the screen to discuss that segment — the *watch-pause-discuss* method. Advantages of this approach include: (1) it is easier to remember the content for each discussion, and (2) it allows the possibility of extending the event over more than one day. However, some may prefer to watch the entire film before discussing.

If you wish to provide your group with printed handouts displaying only questions (no answers), that is available in the companion *handout* version of this Discussion Guide.

The Story of Everything is available to view in theaters from **April 30 – May 6, 2026**. To find a theater near you, visit **TheStoryOfEverything.film**.

FOREWORD

The Heavens Declare

Aldous Huxley, author of *A Brave New World*, once said, "Modern science makes it impossible to believe in a personal God." But was Huxley right? Today, modern science is showing us more of what Christians already know: the universe is not a product of randomness, but was designed with such intricacy and beauty that points to a designer.

Psalm 119 tells us to look up and behold. "The heavens," declares David in Psalm 19, "declare the glory of God." True scientific inquiry, rather than leading us away from the knowledge of God, forces even the most skeptical to reckon with reality. From the intricacy of the living cell to the exact cosmic placement of Earth to the expansion of the universe to the singularity, there is mounting evidence of a beginning and an intelligent cause.

This film, *The Story of Everything*, features prominent scholars wrestling with the amazing beauty, structure, and coherence of a universe whose vastness and complexity we are only beginning to understand. I encourage you, if you are a follower of Jesus, to watch this film to bolster your faith. The film will remind you that the truths you believe about God are not based on a weak foundation, but are bolstered by signposts embedded in creation that can only point to a Creator. This should cause us to fall down in worship and awe of the one who formed us with his hands and breathed into us the breath of life.

If you are not a believer, may I invite you to watch *The Story of Everything* with an open mind? Consider what the Christian gospel says about the heavens, that "day after day they pour out speech (Psalm 19:2)."

Perhaps you have seen this film and have further questions. I invite you to engage the resources here, including this Discussion Guide. If you have questions, please engage a Christian friend or family member.

Christians believe that not only does Creation point us to a designer, but that designer is the triune God of the Bible who not only created the world, but sustains it by his power. We were created by that God in his image and made to know him. Through his son, who is both human and divine, we can have a relationship with the God who hung the stars. We can experience his love, his grace, and his forgiveness.

This Discussion Guide contains questions and Scriptures to help you on this journey.

— Daniel Darling

Director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Seminary, columnist for *World*, and author of several books including *The Dignity Revolution*, *Agents of Grace*, and *In Defense of Christian Patriotism*.

INTRODUCTION

Two Rival Stories of Everything

Question 1

The film introduces two competing stories of everything — two explanations of reality. What are these two rival stories which need to be evaluated?

a. Story #1: The world is the unplanned result of unintelligent natural processes.

b. Story #2: The world is the purposeful product of intelligent design.

Question 2

Read Genesis 1:1. What does it mean that the Bible begins with God, not mere matter or energy?

Read: Genesis 1:1

Question 3

What does atheist Richard Dawkins believe will happen to him when he dies? Which "story of everything" leads Dawkins to believe this about his future?

a. Dawkins says he will cease to exist when his body dies and decays.

b. He believes this because he thinks the world originated by unplanned unintelligent processes.

Question 4

What if the evidence best supports the other story of everything — the one Dawkins denies? What would that mean for your future?

a. Because the world is the purposeful product of intelligent design, this means you have the prospect of a meaningful life within the parameters of the creator's plan.

b. The scientific theory of intelligent design points to a creator. The Bible goes further: it reveals God's plan of creation and salvation. The evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, and many rational arguments, renders Christianity a reasonable faith with strong historical and scientific support.

Question 5

Read Acts 12:24–28. Where does Paul claim that purpose and meaning originate?

Read: Acts 12:24–28

CHAPTER 1

The Beginning

Part One: The Expansion

Question 1

Astronomer Edwin Hubble found evidence that the universe is expanding. Why does the expansion of the universe mean that the universe had a beginning?

a. When you trace cosmic history backwards, the universe would be ever smaller and denser.

b. The extreme point of this backward march through time would be the beginning of the universe.

Question 2

Read Genesis 1:1–3. Genesis implies a beginning. Many debate whether the universe had a beginning. Why is this debate important?

Read: Genesis 1:1–3

Part Two: Rival Cosmologies

Question 3

Cosmologist Fred Hoyle tried to avoid a cosmic beginning by a steady state theory. How was Hoyle's theory defeated after a key prediction of the Big Bang theory was confirmed by two physicists in 1964?

a. Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson detected the radiation leftover from the Big Bang.

b. Discuss the story of how Penzias and Wilson made this discovery, including their efforts to remove pigeon droppings from their huge antenna. They were puzzled at first, but then later realized that they had made one of the greatest discoveries of the 20th century.

Question 4

Read Hebrews 11:3. The writer of Hebrews says "by faith" we "understand the universe was formed at God's command." In our contemporary world, why is faith often depicted as unreasonable?

Read: Hebrews 11:3

Question 5

Is it possible to approach discovery and observation without any faith — such as faith that the human mind is capable of reasoning because it was created by God rather than emerged from unintelligent natural processes?

Part Three: The Singularity

Question 6

Scientists have discovered that mass causes a curvature of space and time. As you go back in time, space-time curvature approaches infinity, known as the "singularity." Why does this mean that space, time, and matter all

had a beginning? Consequently, why must the cause of the universe be beyond space, time, and matter?

a. The singularity constitutes the origin of time, space, and matter. The singularity points to a cause of the universe's beginning that fits well with the Bible's account of God creating the universe without using pre-existing matter.

b. God, as revealed in the Bible, is the ultimate self-explanatory non-material being who is beyond the restrictions of space and time — perfectly fitting the kind of intelligent cause necessary to explain the origin of the universe.

Part Four: A Mind Behind the Universe

Question 7

Some scientists have suggested that the mathematical structure of natural laws has the power to create the universe. What's wrong with this proposal?

a. Stephen Meyer explained that, according to atheist Stephen Hawking, "out of math comes matter, space, time and energy. But these mathematical equations don't describe anything yet because there is no universe yet to describe. Math has no causal power by itself" because "in our experience math is conceptual. It exists in a mind. So if we're saying the universe came out of a set of mathematical equations, are we really saying that the material universe came out of a mind?"

b. Discuss the significance of this critique of Hawking's attempt to avoid the ultimate mind — God.

Question 8

Read Isaiah 55:8–9. Why is it important that God's thoughts are higher than ours?

Read: Isaiah 55:8–9

CHAPTER 2

The Goldilocks Universe

Part One: The Fine Tuning of the Laws of Physics

Question 1

Imagine a machine that creates universes. There are dials on this machine for selecting natural laws and other features. Only a very tiny combination of dial settings would generate universes that make life possible (this is the "fine tuning" of the cosmos). Because all of these selections need to be "just right" for life, what kind of cause is needed to create a cosmos that can host life?

a. The dials that must be finely tuned to allow for the existence of life include the speed of light, and the masses of protons, neutrons, and electrons. If these universal constants had only slightly different values, life would be impossible.

b. Such fine tuning is an example of complex (unlikely) and specified (life-functional) information. In our experience, complex specified information can only come from a mind — think, for example, of a finely tuned race car engine, which was intelligently designed.

Question 2

Read Job 38:4–7. What does it say about God's sustaining, providential, guiding hand in the universe?

Read: Job 38:4–7

Part Two: Fine Tuning from the Beginning

Question 3

There's another type of fine tuning: the extremely ordered arrangement of matter at the beginning of the universe. As the universe ages, it becomes less orderly. The initial orderly structure of the universe must have been nearly perfect for life to be possible. Why is chance not a good explanation of this kind of hyper-exponential fine tuning?

Hyper-exponential fine tuning is unimaginably improbable without intelligent design.

Part Three: Planetary Fine Tuning

Question 4

Many "just right" factors are required to have a habitable planet. The low probability of each of these factors contributes to an overall extremely low probability of all these factors occurring in one location. How does this show that Earth is rare and special?

a. Discuss these examples of such factors, which collectively are called planetary fine tuning.

1) The gas giant planets in our solar system, such as Jupiter and Saturn, very often take hits for us from comets and asteroids. Without such protection, too many comets and asteroids would hit Earth, which would severely limit its suitability for hosting life. Gas giants are not habitable, but they contribute to the habitability of our planet.

2) Earth is located within the Circumstellar Habitable Zone, which is the region around a star (sun) where liquid water can persist on the surface of a terrestrial planet (a solid, not gas, planet).

3) A moon very much like the one we have is life-critical because it helps stabilize the tilt of the host planet's axis (23.5 degrees in Earth's case). Such a moon is also an essential part of the mechanism for the life-friendly tides in the oceans.

4) For a planet to be habitable, it must have a mechanism for creating a magnetic shield against deadly cosmic radiation that would otherwise exterminate life. Earth's molten magma contributes to such a protective magnetic field.

b. Given that many such factors have to exist in a planet for it to have the potential to host life, this indicates that Earth is rare and special. Earth is rare because there are vastly more ways to have a lifeless planet than a habitable one. This rarity makes Earth stand out as special in the cosmos.

Part Four: The Multiverse

Question 5

Some scientists believe in the multiverse — a vast number of randomly generated universes — and say our universe is one of the few "lucky" ones with life. Does this theory successfully avoid the need for a creator? Why?

a. The multiverse fails to replace God because:

1) All proposed universe generating mechanisms would require fine tuning to make it possible to generate different universes with different initial conditions and laws of physics. Such proposals really just push the fine tuning problem back one level without solving it.

2) We know from ordinary experience that only one cause produces fine tuning — intelligence. Whenever we see fine tuning, we always trace that type of system back to a mind, whether we're talking about a finely tuned gourmet meal recipe or a finely tuned race car engine.

3) Mindless matter can't ponder a set of possibilities to choose a functional (fine-tuned) result.

b. The multiverse is unobservable. It is a leap of blind faith that fails to replace God with chance.

Question 6

Read Psalm 8:3–4. Why does the vastness of the universe make God's care for us surprising and special?

Read: Psalm 8:3–4

CHAPTER 3

Design of Life

Part One: Molecular Machines

Question 1

The living cell is an enormously complex miniaturized factory full of tiny molecular machines built of proteins. These machines have functions required for life, such as the flagellum motor that enables bacteria to swim. How do molecular machines such as the flagellum look designed, rather than haphazardly evolved?

a. Biochemist Michael Behe explains: "If you subtract just one of the key components of the flagellar motor, the motor will cease to function." This is an unsolved problem for evolutionary theory because evolution allegedly occurs by countless small unplanned changes. Every intermediate step would have to be functional. Molecular machines can't originate that way.

b. The origin of molecular machines requires foresight and planning. That's intelligent design.

Question 2

Read Psalm 139:13–14. How does the functional complexity of the human body vindicate David's words in Psalm 139?

Read: Psalm 139:13–14

Part Two: Cracking the Code

Question 3

Proteins are composed of long chains of amino acids. Using the analogy of written language, amino acids are like individual letters of the alphabet. How is creating a cell like writing a book? What is the only known cause capable of generating this information?

a. DNA stores the code that cells use to precisely sequence amino acids to make proteins.

b. The number of amino acids used to make proteins is close to the number of letters in our alphabet. To continue the analogy, proteins would be like words or sentences. However, since a protein with 100 amino acids would be considered small, even the shortest "words" in the cell are very long compared to words in human language. And just as languages have thousands of words, there are thousands of different types of proteins in many living cells. Just as sentences combine to form paragraphs, proteins combine to form multi-protein molecular machines. Just as paragraphs are coordinated to form chapters, molecular machines coordinate to form major systems in the cell.

c. Experience tells us that only one cause generates sequence-specific lines of code — intelligence.

Question 4

Read Job 10:8–12; Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 64:8. What is unique about how humans are created compared to the way God created the rest of the world?

Read: Job 10:8–12; Genesis 2:7; Isaiah 64:8

Part Three: The Origin of Life

Question 5

For many years, those studying how life originated tried to show how DNA and proteins could have assembled themselves before cells existed. Explain the failure of experiments aimed at showing how life could have originated without intelligent guidance.

a. The experiments begin with highly engineered chemicals (constructed and purified by scientists).

b. They produce tiny percentages of life's building blocks, which are surrounded by garbage that renders the overall result useless for building life.

c. These experiments and their chemical products involve natural ingredients, but those ingredients have been intelligently shaped by humans in a way that is similar to how we shape natural ingredients to make a cell phone. A cell phone's ingredients exist in concentrations and purities and arrangements never found in nature, very similar to origin-of-life lab experiments. The origin of cell phones and the origin of life both require intelligent agency.

Question 6

Read John 5:26; Psalm 36:9. What does it mean that life originates in God Himself?

Read: John 5:26; Psalm 36:9

Part Four: The Origin of the Code

Question 7

What two traits — if both are detected — enable us to know that something was intelligently designed? How does this apply to Mount Rushmore and DNA's code?

a. Only intelligent design can explain something that is both complex and specified.

1) Something is complex if it is composed of an arrangement of many parts.

2) It is specified if its many parts are arranged in a specific way that enables a function.

b. The information in such an object is called complex specified information, or "CSI."

1) Experience shows us that "CSI in something" indicates it was intelligently designed.

2) Mountain examples: The shape of an ordinary mountain is complex (it has many parts), but its many parts are not arranged and shaped in a specific way that would give it a function. Such ordinary complex mountain shapes are easily explained by chance and natural laws (including wind and water erosion). However, the sculpted faces of four U.S. presidents in Mount Rushmore are both complex (composed of many parts) and specified so as to have a function. Mount Rushmore's function is to commemorate four U.S. presidents. Like Mount Rushmore's presidential faces, DNA is complex (composed of many parts) and specified so as to have functions — coding for life-functional proteins, and much more. Based on ordinary experience of observing things which possess both complexity and specificity, we know that DNA and proteins must have been designed by intelligent agency (rational thinking).

Question 8

Read Romans 1:19–20; Psalm 19:1–4. How does creation communicate without words?

Read: Romans 1:19–20; Psalm 19:1–4

CHAPTER 4

The Story of Everything

Question 1

Which story of everything makes sense of the world's stunning beauty?

a. There is much more beauty in the natural world than can be explained if the world is the product of unguided material processes. This is an unsolved problem for the story of materialism.

b. But if the world was made by a beautiful mind, then it would reflect the beauty of its creator. So the world's beauty is well explained by the scientific theory of intelligent design.

c. The Bible further explains God's beauty and its expression in the cosmos and in our personal lives.

Question 2

Which story of everything offers the best prospect of recognizing your personal life as objectively meaningful and beautifully purposeful?

Question 3

Read Psalm 27:4. Given what we have seen in this film, how should it motivate Christians?

Read: Psalm 27:4

> *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."*
>
> **— Psalm 19:1**